

no. 45 Heritage Diplomacy and Australia's
Responses to a Shifting Landscape of
International Conservation

Tim Winter



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Heritage Diplomacy and Australia's Responses to a Shifting Landscape of International Conservation

ABSTRACT

The economic and political shifts that together constitute contemporary globalisation are opening up new spaces for non-Western modes of heritage governance in the international arena. Perhaps most notable here is the so-called rise of Asia, wherein a growing number of countries are investing heavily in a range of institutions and initiatives designed to provide cultural sector aid across the region. These new forms of heritage diplomacy hold significant implications for the governance of heritage at the global level, such that they promise to unsettle those structures and norms which emerged from Europe and North America and stabilised internationally over the course of the twentieth century. The paper explores such changes and some of the ways the Australian heritage conservation sector might respond to this rapidly shifting landscape of heritage diplomacy.

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Figure 1: Embassy of the People's Republic of China, Canberra (photo by author)

In the marking of Canberra's centenary in 2013 very little attention was paid to the architecture of its 'diplomatic quarters'. On the one hand this was entirely understandable given they were not a feature of Walter Burley Griffin's designs or the city's early construction phases. And yet, seen together, Canberra's embassy districts have given the city a highly unusual, perhaps even unique, form of heritage-scaping: an assembled 'family of nations' that uses architecture to communicate the distinctive culture of each.

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the majority of purpose built embassies around the world were nondescript grey cube-like structures, where the functions of security and monumentalist state-crafting largely determined form. By contrast, the majority of Canberra's architects of diplomacy pursued an altogether more interesting strategy, that of linking their buildings to styles and designs deemed to be nationally iconic and readily identifiable as a distinct cultural heritage. Today a mini-tourism industry has evolved, whereby guided tours enable visitors to learn about the history of various embassies and the countries and cultures they represent. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate how China and Japan have deployed architecture and other elements to communicate their national heritage. The design of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, for example, explicitly draws upon a vocabulary of 'traditional Chinese architecture' and garden designs familiar to provinces in the south of the country.¹ Their official introduction to the embassy explains the design and selection of materials:

As a customary Chinese practice, a pair of white-marble lions are placed in front of the Office Building. The entrance lobbies, reception and multi-function rooms in the Office Building and the Ambassador's Residence are all fitted out in the traditional Chinese manner with special plaster-patternizing, colour-painting, gilding and traditional wooden carving technique... Traditional Chinese golden-coloured glazed tiles are used for the roofs of most buildings

¹ For more information see: A Brief Introduction of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Australia, Available at: <http://au.china-embassy.org/eng/sqjs/t57016.htm>, accessed on 05/06/2014

whilst peacock blue-coloured glazed tiles are used for that of the covered corridor and the pavilions so that the tiles of two colours shine distinctively, yet harmoniously in the sun. Many of the building materials used were imported from China...The Chinese Embassy in Australia not only reveals to the friends from Australia and all parts of the world the traditional Chinese architecture, but also has become another unique tourist attraction for Canberra.

(Source: <http://au.china-embassy.org/eng/sgjs/t57016.htm>, accessed 05/06/2014)



Figure 2: Embassy of Japan, Canberra (photo by author)

In this regard Canberra offers a fabulous example of what has come to be known as 'cultural diplomacy' in action. With analyses of cultural diplomacy largely focusing on certain themes, such as the role of state supported media outlets - Voice of America, BBC World or Al Jazeera, or the globalisation of popular culture exports - food, fashion and music - much less attention has been paid to the mobilisation of cultural heritage in advancing diplomatic interests around the world.² Canberra thus offers us an intriguing reminder that a more careful reading of such tie-ins still needs to be undertaken. Indeed, and as we shall see shortly, if we pursue the concept of heritage diplomacy more explicitly it soon becomes apparent that the penetration of cultural heritage into Australia's diplomatic entanglements in the Asia Pacific region stretches much further than that expressed in Canberra's diplomatic architecture.

Cultural globalisation and the internationalisation of heritage conservation

It is now widely recognised that heritage, and its conservation, form part of the flows and interconnections that make up contemporary globalisation. The ongoing expansion of heritage conservation over the course of the twentieth century was marked by ever greater links between culture and capital at multiple scales. Within a highly complex landscape of heritage funding, the internationalisation of conservation practice has largely occurred via the coming together of funding structures operating at local, national, regional and/or global

² Jane Leoffler's *Architecture of Diplomacy: building America's embassies* is thus noteworthy in this regard, despite the fact that it deals with a single country and explores the use of national heritage in their design in particular ways.

levels. As we move through the second decade of the twenty-first century, despite the fact that a number of governments in the West have made significant cuts to the heritage sector in recent times, the number of organisations and level of resources being put into the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage around the world continues to proliferate.

Indeed, one of the defining features of our contemporary interconnected world is the ongoing expansion of the international governance of culture, including the safeguarding of those cultural remnants from the past. In the domain of heritage conservation, notable examples here include emergence of institutions such as The Getty Conservation Institute, The Aga Khan Trust For Culture, the World Monuments Fund, Global Heritage Fund, as well as those bodies known primarily around the world by their acronyms: UNESCO, ICOM, ICCROM and ICOMOS.³ Since the 1980s however, we have also seen a major expansion in the number of non-governmental bodies and foundations that have looked towards the conservation of heritage as an effective tool for advancing their core goals, many of which may not be directly related to the cultural sector. Examples here include The Henry Luce Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, The Asia Foundation, and The Lee Foundation. Accompanying, indeed driving, much of this has been the vast growth in philanthropic funding, which has permeated across numerous sectors of international discourse, including that of heritage conservation. Perhaps most notably, the United States has a well established tradition of private, philanthropic aid supporting the cultural sector. With tax incentives enabling an inflow of funds to heritage related initiatives, support has often been characterised by the personal causes and interests of individual donors.

One of the most significant developments in the internationalisation of heritage conservation has been the 'cultural turn' in the 'development' sector. Since the early 1980s organisations such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Africa Development Bank, Latin America Regional Development Bank, and the European Commission have undertaken various heritage related programmes. The Millennium Development Goals also proved important in strengthening the links between these organisations and the ties between cultural preservation and socio-economic development. But crucially, and as Drainville (2003) notes, despite the sustained rise in multi-lateral funding towards developing countries since the end of the Second World War, the role of the nation-state in such affairs has not diminished. Bi-lateral aid continues to be a defining feature of today's global heritage-development nexus. Initiatives undertaken and supported by AusAID in Southeast Asia and the Pacific over recent decades are illustrative of this point.

As numerous authors have highlighted, the provision of state funded and non-governmental assistance is inherently political and shaped by past and present world orders. While it might be tempting to regard the provision of assistance in heritage conservation as an essentially apolitical activity, closer inspection reveals how donor states have long engaged in this sector as a mechanism of 'soft power' (Nye 2004). For example, in the earliest years of the Cold War the United States established a number of overseas research centres, located in strategically important locations. In 1948 US interests in Egyptian antiquities gained considerable momentum through the establishment of the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE). As the US sought to increase its international presence in international cultural heritage conservation and research over the subsequent decades the model for Egypt was replicated elsewhere, with similar institutes set up in Turkey (1964), Iraq (1989) and Bulgaria (2004). American Schools of Oriental Research were also established in Jerusalem, Jordan and Cyprus (Luke and Kersel 2013).

³ UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), ICOM (International Council of Monuments), ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property) and ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites)

Even if heritage projects are not state funded, when operating overseas they become part of a country's 'cultural export' and, as such, often absorbed into the bureaucratic structures of diplomacy and international relations. The John Paul Getty Trust and the Rockefeller and Luce Foundations are among those that contributed to favourable diplomatic relations and the popular appeal of the US as it increased its global influence during the second half of the twentieth century.

The cultural-political dynamics of heritage funding is also evident in the context of contemporary post-colonial relations. For the former European powers of Britain, France, the Netherlands and Spain the export of heritage projects and assistance invariably continues to align with governmental priorities for maintaining former territory or dominion relations. The heritage sector provides the ideal forum through which linguistic and cultural links can be celebrated, promoted and re-affirmed. As Lauren Yapp (2014) shows in the context of Indonesia, the Netherlands' *Mutual Cultural Heritage Program* is oriented by a language of 'mutual' or 'shared' heritage. Yapp suggests this language mirrors the ideals of Dutch 'enlightened' colonialism in the 1900s and 1920s, and thus continues to perform important political work in a key cultural diplomacy initiative for the Netherlands today.

Understanding international heritage conservation as a domain of activity that has taken shape with various wider geo-political contexts soon reveals the limitations of accounts suggesting the global rise of cultural governance has been an increasingly seamless, homogenising process - neatly advanced by UNESCO and mechanisms such as the world heritage system. There are important regional differences to account for. Returning to the examples of the Aga Khan Trust For Culture, World Monuments Fund, or Getty Conservation Institute, it is apparent that there are distinct cultural/geographical weightings or imbalances in the distribution of their projects and interests. While a number of these supra- or international organisations claim to be 'global' in nature, in reality various historical, political and practical reasons mean their geographical coverage is far from even. Even the archetype and architect of today's global heritage movement, UNESCO, remains deeply imbalanced in its coverage, as their map of the World Heritage Sites by region illustrates.⁴ Although efforts to address such Euro-centric leanings remain a priority, the inherent complexities of reforming such a large organisation means this will understandably take some time to rectify.

Stepping back then, it is important to recognise that the ongoing folding of cultural sector international cooperation into other streams of humanitarian and developmental aid, means the heritage sector will need to increasingly consider questions around neo-imperialism and dependency. To that end, further examples could be cited illustrating the complex networks of institutions and funding structures that have solidified over the last century or so, enabling European and North American countries to dominate the international arena of heritage aid and diplomacy. Putting such themes aside however, what I wish to point to here is the more recent surge in activity within this space from Asia.

In terms of the development of formal heritage diplomacy programs across Asia, Japan has played a pioneering role. As Natsuko Akagawa highlights, in the aftermath of World War II, Japan set about integrating heritage initiatives into its overseas assistance programs in an attempt to repair its image within the region. Oriented by a narrative of peace, Japan has successfully implemented cultural aid programs across much of the region, particularly in those less-developed countries, where moderate amounts of aid funding can deliver significant goodwill. Within South and Southeast Asia, Japan currently operates heritage

sector projects in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam. To help coordinate these and other programs the *Japan Consortium for International Cooperation in Cultural Heritage* (JCIC) was established in 2006, a body closely linked to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Agency for Cultural Affairs. Beyond such forms of bi-lateral cooperation, Japan has also invested millions of dollars supporting multi-lateral and intergovernmental structures, most notably UNESCO. The creation of the *Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation and Promotion of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* in 1993 proved highly successful in raising the country's standing on the stage of international conservation, as did the election of the diplomat Kōichirō Matsuura as Director General of UNESCO in 1999.

More recently however, parallel programs have been developed by Japan's regional neighbours as investment in heritage aid and diplomacy has increased rapidly across the region. Since the early 2000s South Korea has pumped funding into a number of institutions aimed at facilitating conservation expertise both domestically and overseas. The *National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage* houses a series of conservation and research divisions spanning archaeology, art, architecture and intangible heritage. In addition to signing a series of MOUs with other bodies in the Asian region, the organisation has invested heavily in workshops, field-trips, and research collaborations over the last decade or so. By focusing on Buddhist archaeological sites, collaborations with Mongolia, China and Japan have, once again, been advanced via a discourse of shared heritage. Likewise, the *Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea* (CHA), an independent government agency since 1999, has moved beyond its original domestic remit by signing nearly sixty agreements with organisations in fourteen countries since the early 2000s. This program of public diplomacy seeks to fulfil a mission of 'awaken[ing] people around the world to the value and excellence of Korean cultural heritage. CHA also strives to strengthen international cooperation in the field of cultural heritage through partnerships with other countries.'⁵

Leaving China aside, the case of India is also particularly interesting. Much like in the developmental aid sector, India has sought to move to a position of being a net exporter of cultural sector aid, rather than being merely a recipient. Such efforts form part of a broader strategy of transcending India's international reputation and ranking as an 'under-developed' country. Cultural heritage assistance since the early 1990s into Southeast Asia has formed part of this with multiple initiatives undertaken in the areas of archaeology, textiles, and urban heritage conservation. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), for example, has long been active in Cambodia and Indonesia, and in more recent times stepped up its presence in Myanmar. In the case of Cambodia, India was alone in the international community in offering assistance with the conservation and stabilisation of Angkor's temples during the 1980s (Bhandari 1995). Other countries would not become involved until after the Paris Peace Accords of 1991, once Cambodia began transitioning towards a more stable political environment. In a similar vein, the ASI was among the most active international heritage agencies in Myanmar prior to the wave of reforms that started with the elections of November 2010. Highly concerned by the growing influence of China in Myanmar, Delhi invoked a discourse of mutual pasts to build trust and alliances in contemporary diplomatic relations, folding archaeology into trade deals and official diplomatic visits. The ASI offered assistance to restore a number of temples at Pagan declared to be ancient sacred sites 'whose architecture is similar to temples in Bengal and Orissa'.⁶ As it became apparent that the shift towards a civilian government would be

5 See: http://english.cha.go.kr/english/about_new/mission.jsp?mc=EN_02_02, (accessed on 16 February 2014).

6 Quoted from www.telegraphindia.com/1100722/jsp/frontpage/story_12712529.jsp, (accessed on 10 February 2014)

accompanied by the opening up of Myanmar's economy, the Indian government stepped up its trade and assistance packages, and on an official visit in May 2012 Manmohan Singh spoke of how 'India and Myanmar share age old cultural and civilizational ties. Merchants, monks and maritime traders carried influences and traditions from one to the other....Our common Buddhist heritage is an even stronger spiritual bond among our peoples' (Singh 2012).

What we see here then is a fast growing capacity among a number of countries in the Asia region for exporting heritage sector aid. To be more specific, in the fast changing theatre of economic globalisation, heritage and heritage conservation assistance are playing an increasingly prominent role in the foreign policy thinking of numerous non-Western and emerging powers, and in their relations with countries both within and outside their respective regions. The growing economic and political power that a number of Asian countries now enjoy on the international stage, via their own domestic strength and regional alignments, means that new actors are shaping how the governance and stewardship of the cultural past is both framed and practiced at the international level. Crucially, such shifts in cultural sector aid are also occurring on the back of changes in the geographies of developmental aid in Asia. In countries like Cambodia, Laos and Sri Lanka, the bulk of the bilateral aid and technical development assistance comes from India, China and Korea (Winter 2014). By implication, organisations like the Archaeological Survey of India and the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea now have the political and economic platform they require to implement programs in some of the region's most iconic and historically significant heritage sites.

Australia and the Asian Century

The question thus arises of where Australia stands in relation to this rapidly changing environment. William Logan (2013) has argued that Australia was somewhat slow in developing heritage conservation initiatives as part of a soft diplomacy program for the Asia region. He suggests active involvement only really formed in the late 1980s, with momentum coming from a number of key projects; citing advisory missions associated with the protection of the Ancient Quarter of Hanoi as one such example. Further initiatives and networks were developed via the establishment of *AusHeritage* in 1996, which brought together both heritage practitioners and academics. Since then a series of individuals have created projects, with the region of Southeast Asia - most notably Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia - proving particularly fertile ground for collaborations, consultancies and research studies. As the success of the China Principles indicates, The Burra Charter has also proved an extremely expedient mechanism for fostering dialogues and engagement across the region in recent decades. Over a period spanning three decades or so, Australia has successfully built up a reputation and set of institutional and personal relations in the heritage sector that reach far and wide across the Asia Pacific region.

Looking forward though, I would suggest the economic and political ascendancy of Asia, together with the marked increase in intra-regional heritage diplomacy activity, represents a new and emergent landscape, one that Australia is only partially equipped to respond to. There is much evidence to suggest that the dynamics and directions of expertise flows across national boundaries are changing in important ways. A number of countries are investing heavily to move from net importers of heritage expertise to being net exporters. As a result, new networks are forming with the centres of influence shifting accordingly. The creation of WHITRAP (The World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region) in 2007 offers one such example. Operationalised via three branches, in Beijing, Shanghai and Suzhou, the institute represents one example among

many revealing China's intention to play a leading role in the area of conservation science, restoration and capacity building for the Asia Pacific region.

Back in Australia, in the wake of the *Australia in the Asian Century Issues Paper* commissioned by the Labor Government in 2012, an intense debate around questions of regional engagement occurred via a wave of publications, reports and media responses across multiple sectors, from film and television to mining, education to tourism. Certain key themes reoccurred throughout the debate: the need to improve Asian language capabilities; the value of long-term, trust-based partnerships; and the need for a sustainable, integrated strategy. Although such rhetoric descended into a series of platitudes at certain moments, and notwithstanding the Coalition Government's decision to shelve the White Paper upon election in 2013, it was a moment that brought forth a series of ideas that will undoubtedly remain highly pertinent to the heritage conservation sector in the future.

As Alexander Downer (2012) noted, 'if Australia's regional diplomacy is to continue to succeed, it needs to be built around a thorough knowledge of the region and a coherent plan for engagement'. *On the Ground & in the Know: the Victoria-Asia Cultural Engagement Research Report*, published by Asialink Arts and Arts Victoria, considered such issues for the cultural sector. The report identified the deficit in available data as one of the key challenges facing the sector:

The extraordinary growth in Asia, particularly over the last five years, has focused government at all levels on the policy implications for Australia. It is broadly acknowledged that cultural engagement is a crucial pathway for developing and deepening Australia's relationship with Asia. Good policy requires robust data and research. However unlike other sectors, there is very little quantitative or qualitative data available about cultural engagement between Australian artists and arts organisations and the Asian region.

(Asialink Arts & Arts Victoria 2013: 8)

Clearly, the heritage conservation sector could be included in this summation, given the similar dearth of data. The cultural sector, including heritage, faces the problem of quantifying outputs and impacts, given culture fails to be captured by statistics and neat import/export tallies. Moreover, the authors also argue that 'old models of cultural engagement are not necessarily relevant or effective today and analyses are required for understanding new and emergent trends' (ibid.: 66). Crucially, the justification for addressing such challenges remains clearer than ever, in light of the shifting economies in the Asia region, most notably the ongoing transition towards knowledge and culture based economies, as well as the rise of the middle class:

There is increasing focus on international cultural engagement, in part driven by the growth of Asia and considerable investment in cultural infrastructure in many Asian countries.

(ibid.)

But as the authors of the report suggest, if Australian organisations and businesses are to more productively enact cultural sector engagement, a series of specific issues remain critical, including:

the need for long-term relationships, the need for mutuality of exchange and the increasing role of small-to-medium non-government organisations in developing peer-to-peer relationships that generate trust.

(ibid.: 67)

Organisations such as AICOMOS, AusHeritage, together with the private sector and universities are well placed to enact such a vision. But if sustaining relationships through repeat visitations and ongoing exchange opportunities is deemed to be of paramount importance, familiar questions around funding and the challenge of developing strategies for sustained activities naturally arise. The complexity of such issues means that - rather offering some perfunctory, superficial remarks here - their analysis would be better served via a number of workshop forums, dedicated reports or such like. Instead, my key aim here is to signal the merits of a more strategic approach to engagement, one that is responsive to the rapidly shifting realities of the Asia Pacific region. To that end, the key recommendations outlined by Asialink Arts and Arts Victoria for engaging with Asia are deemed pertinent here. Accordingly, they advocate the need to:

1. Develop long-term, sustainable relationships rather than one-off projects.
2. Support opportunities for two-way exchange in projects.
3. Build individual and organisational Asia-capability and knowledge.
4. Coordinate opportunities for peer-to-peer networking.
5. Provide access to quality information and advice, including documentation about opportunities, logistics and experiences.
6. Promote the 'value' of cultural engagement with Asia through advocacy and leadership at the political, bureaucratic and key agency levels to other areas of government, business and the community.
7. Invest in research on Asia-Australia cultural engagement and capability to ensure Australia is at the forefront of best practice in this field.

(ibid.: 68)

In its own manifesto towards the Asian Century, *Screen Australia* identified a similar landscape of opportunities and challenges.⁷ Interestingly, the organisation has pursued a strategy of targeting certain countries each year, with China being the focus of 2010, followed by South Korea in 2011, and India in 2012. This identification of key markets arose in part through partnerships with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAT) and The Australia International Cultural Council (AICC), Australia's principal cultural diplomacy body. At the time of writing both DFAT and AICC are undergoing review and their future priorities and funding capacities remains unclear. Nonetheless, we can safely assume priority countries will continue to be identified, and it is highly likely that opportunities for embedding heritage conservation related initiatives into broader programmes of aid will continue to present themselves.

To put these responses to the Asian Century white paper and their relevance in their broader context, it is helpful to consider the parallels and characteristics shared by international heritage conservation and science diplomacy. Accordingly, in 2011 the Royal Society of Great Britain proclaimed:

The scientific community often works beyond national boundaries on problems of common interest, so is well placed to support emerging forms of diplomacy that require nontraditional alliances of nations, sectors and non-governmental

7 See: *Screen Australia Response to Australia in the Asian Century Issues Paper*, Available online: http://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/documents/SA_publications/AsianCenturyWhitePaper_2012.pdf, accessed 01/06/2014

As a sphere that straddles both the scientific and non-scientific, heritage diplomacy can be centred as much around science and technical forms of assistance as around the more humanist or social issues of planning, community participation or governance. Indeed, I would suggest the close interface between culture and science that constitutes heritage conservation only adds further weight to the attributes and perceived benefits identified by the Royal Society. The long histories of efforts to conserve both culture and nature, together with the widespread recognition today of the need to properly manage those sites and resources of supra-national significance, directly speak to this.

But as the Royal Society's report highlights, and as noted earlier, we are moving into an ever more 'disaggregated world order' via the pluralisation of agencies, institutions and actors involved in different aspects of governance and policy. The cultural sector will be no exception to this. The recent study by Hocking et al. pursues this idea of fragmentation and disaggregation more closely to make sense of the *Futures for Diplomacy*. To that end, they state:

The diplomatic environment of the 21st century is marked by change and uncertainty. Features include...the expansion in the number and variety of international actors empowered by ICT and social media. These actors now extend beyond traditional NGOs to more amorphous civil society groups... [with] the progressive fragmentation of the rules and norms governing international political and trade relations as more confident emerging states increasingly assert their own values and rules. One consequence will be a continuing weakening of multilateral institutions.

(Hocking et al.: 2012: 3)

This prediction of the weakening of multilateral institutions is held by others and is born out in the heritage sector by the cuts enforced upon UNESCO, ICOMOS and the World Heritage Centre in recent times. Accompanying this, we are seeing the resurgence of the nation-state and a distinct growth in new actors, as noted above; a number of whom are already having a disruptive impact on the international civil society spaces within which they work. Crucially though, it is a shifting environment that means the practice of international relations and the diplomatic processes that help shape this are diversifying and expanding around cross-disciplinary, cross-sector relationships and networks. As a consequence, Hockings et al. suggest:

Diplomats will cease to be gatekeepers guarding the borders of the foreign, becoming instead boundary spanners integrating the different landscapes and actors of the diplomatic environment.

(Ibid. : 2012: 5)

If their analysis of this global trend is right, this opening up in the practice and scope of international diplomacy means new sectors and themes, including the cultural, are likely to be embraced by governments across the Asia Pacific to a greater degree than we have seen in the past. This presents significant opportunities for the Australian heritage sector, in that it reaffirms the prevailing trends towards the closer alignment of heritage conservation and the advancement of diplomatic relations highlighted earlier. In this regard then, there is

much to be gained from building on the insights of *Screen Australia* and *Asialink Arts and Arts Victoria*, and their recommendations for more strategic planning and innovation.

Conclusion

Through an exploration of international heritage conservation as an arena of heritage diplomacy, the aim here has been to suggest important shifts are now occurring in the cultural sector in the Asia Pacific, due to a combination of the so-called rise of Asia and major changes in the institutional environment of international policy making and governance. It is a set of unfolding scenarios that poses both challenges and possibilities for the Australia heritage sector. As I have argued elsewhere (Winter 2014), recent years have seen the growing incorporation of cultural heritage into other areas of international discourse, such that it now regularly forms part of the debates and agendas that constitute contemporary international and global governance. Whether it's sustainability and sustainable development, climate change, policies around human mobility or citizenry, the fight against extremism or state global wealth, the heritage sector has a much greater stake in these areas than it has ever had before.

However, the analyses presented here strongly point towards the need for more strategic thinking within Australia of how to productively insert heritage conservation into the issues and topics that will constitute international discourse in the Asia Pacific over the coming years and decades. Hockings et al. (2012: 13) argue one of the key challenges going forward is building and working with 'coalitions of the willing', and this remains true for the heritage sector if it is to maintain its ascendancy in the sphere of international relations and play a distinct role in policy formation for cities, culturally and naturally significant environments, and a variety of social development programmes. Crucially, given the growth in heritage diplomacy from within Asia, Australia is faced with the very real challenge of developing new cultural and institutional capacities and literacies: ones capable of productively engaging with the region. I would suggest Australia ICOMOS, in collaboration with its sister agencies across the heritage sector and beyond, together with the university sector, are among those best placed to take up such challenges. The Australian heritage conservation sector has successfully built a distinct and strong reputation across the region over a number of decades. The economic and political changes we are now seeing in the Asia Pacific raise important questions of the degree to which this success can be maintained and further built upon. A number of themes have been explored here in order to suggest that more integrative, strategic approaches are required if Australia is to both respond to and benefit from the historically significant shifts we are now witnessing in international heritage conservation.

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